

## Nature and the Feminine: An Ecofeminist Reading of Kishwar Naheed's Selected Poems

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### Abstract

Ecofeminism is an approach for understanding the interconnected oppression of women and nature, emphasizing the need to address both simultaneously. In Ecofeminism, the relationship between the feminine and the natural world is explored to reveal patterns of domination and resistance. Many researchers have applied ecofeminism to different literary works, but there is inadequate research found on the ecofeminist exploration of Kishwar Naheed's poems. Applying textual analysis by Catherine Belsey, the study aims to qualitatively explore the representation of nature and the feminine within Naheed's poetry. The findings of this study suggested that Naheed's poems intertwine environmental and gender concerns, highlighting the dual exploitation and resilience of women and nature. This analysis emphasizes how ecofeminist perspectives enhance the thematic depth and critical understanding of Naheed's poetry, affirming their relevance in literary interpretation.

### INTRODUCTION

Literary theory is defined as a set of concepts and methods used to interpret literary works. According to Brewton (2005), it is a collection of ideas that are utilized in the practical reading of literature. It provides tools for understanding and examining the realm of literature. Literary work is not neutral but a reflection of ideology and hidden agendas (Zi, 2000). These hidden ideologies and themes hidden in a text are uncovered with the help of literary theory in the same way. Literary theories available for analysis of a text are as diverse as that range from Formalism, in which a text is evaluated on its qualities, to New Criticism that is again based on judging a text on its qualities, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Feminism, Marxism, Ecocriticism and Psychoanalytical theory. Ecofeminism is a literary theory that addresses the connection between oppressed women and oppressed nature, and how it has been the case in Patriarchal and capitalist times. Warren (1990) described ecofeminism as a movement and a way of thinking that is related to the oppression of women and the environment, as well as a belief in the social and environmental justice. In literary texts, ecofeminism investigates symbolic or material conjunction of the feminine and the natural world. Ecofeminism as a literary theory concerns the representation of women and nature in literature and shows how they are being oppressed by men and proposes feminism as resistance.

Kishwar Naheed (1940) is a well-known feminist poet from Pakistan who is famous for his powerful expression of women's experiences as well as pushing society. Her poetry often intertwines the themes of nature and the feminine, presenting a voice of resistance against oppression. Several research found on the application of different literary theories on the work of Kishwar Naheed but there is inadequate research found on analyzing her work using ecofeminism. The purpose of this paper is to analyze Naheed's poetry through an ecofeminist lens to see how her work captures how women and nature interwoven struggles. The works studied for this research are *The Grass is Really Like Me*, and *We Sinful Women*. This study's current findings are an addition to literary discourse. It provides an eco-feminist method for often systematic analysis of different types of texts. Besides, the presence of these findings and analysis in the light of which readers have new insights of the entwined challenges of women and nature in Kishwar Naheed's poetry.

Ecofeminism is defined as an "intellectual movement" whose roots lie in both feminist theory and ecological thought. The concept of ecofeminism originated with thinkers like Françoise d'Eaubonne in the 1970s, when she introduced the term to describe the connection between the exploitation of women and the degradation of nature. This movement revolves around the idea that the domination of women and the environment are interconnected and must be addressed together. A renowned ecofeminist theorist, Vandana Shiva, expanded this concept by linking ecological destruction with patriarchal structures of oppression. Ecofeminism critiques the traditional dualisms of culture/nature, male/female, and human/non-human that have historically justified domination. It claims that both women and nature have been treated as passive, exploitable resources under patriarchal and capitalist systems. In literary studies, ecofeminism explores how literary texts represent the relationship between women and nature, uncovering layers of oppression, resistance, and renewal.

A literary text is often layered with deep symbolic meanings and hidden ideologies that may remain unnoticed without a critical theoretical lens. Kishwar Naheed's poetry contains complex representations of the feminine experience and the natural world, reflecting deep socio-political and ecological concerns. Despite this, there is limited research available on the ecofeminist exploration of Naheed's poems. Therefore, this study aims to apply ecofeminist theory to Kishwar Naheed's selected poems to uncover the interconnected portrayal of women and nature within her work.

This research aims to explore ecofeminist elements in the selected poems of Kishwar Naheed. And to examine how the poetry Kishwar Naheed portrays the interconnected oppression of women and nature. This research is only limited to Kishwar Naheed's poems: *The Grass is Really Like Me*, and *We Sinful Women*, which restricts the generalizability of findings to her entire body of work. Ecofeminism provides a specific interpretive lens, making the analysis subjective in nature and open to alternative readings. Furthermore, the study does not include other theoretical perspectives such as postcolonialism or Marxism, which could provide a broader understanding of Naheed's poetry. Practical constraints, including time and scope, also limit a more comprehensive analysis.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Eco-Criticism

Buell (1995) describes ecocriticism as a practice that critically studies "the environmental imagination" in literature. In *The Environmental Imagination*, he discusses the role of text in shaping perceptions of nature and the environment. He describes the dual function of nature as spreading ecological awareness and moral responsibility toward nature (Buell, 1995).

In *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Glotfelty (1996) defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment." According to her ecocriticism is an earth-centered practice to literary criticism, which explores how nature and the environment are

represented in literary texts and how they enhance the human relationship with the natural world around us (Glotfelty, 1996).

Garrard (2004) defines the field as “the study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis.” In *Ecocriticism*, He mentions the dual role of ecocriticism on analyzing environmental related themes in texts and advocating for ecological sustainability and justice (Garrard, 2004)

Peter Barry’s chapter on ecocriticism in *Beginning Theory* (2020) provides a deep overview of ecocriticism. He placed it within the wider context of literary and cultural theory. Barry highlights key ecocritical concepts, such as the critique of anthropocentrism and the exploration of environmental ethics, and describes its interdisciplinary nature that focus on the relationship between literary and the natural world (Barry, 2020)

### **Historical Context**

The term *ecology* is coined by a philosopher and biologist Ernst Haeckel in 1869. He defines ecology as the field of the study that analyzes “the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings and the study of the interaction of people with their environment” (Marsden, 1994). In 1978, William Rueckert used the term *ecocriticism* in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”. He defined it as “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature” (Glotfelty, 1996).

In *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader* (2015), Kin Hiltner divides ecocriticism into two waves as feminism is divided into three waves. It is an extension of Lawrence Buell distinction between first and second wave in his 2005 book, *The Future of Environmental Criticism*. First-wave ecocriticism (1960s–1990s) focused on nature writing, wilderness, and deep ecology, by highlighting the intrinsic value of nature and criticized anthropocentrism (Hiltner, 2015). Scholars including Lawrence Buell, Arne Naess and Leo Marx explored pastoral ideals and environmental imagination. Second-wave ecocriticism widened the scope to include postcolonial ecocriticism, globalization and environmental justice, addressing the intersection of ecology with gender, race, and politics. The second wave is associated with figuring out the problems faced by the environment and their solution. Figures such as Ursula Heise, Rob Nixon, and Joni Adamson focused on the interrelationship between society and environment. This shift reflects a move from idealized nature to an interdisciplinary, justice-oriented approach which focuses on sustainability of environment (Hiltner, 2015).

Glotfelty (2015) describes the historical development of ecocriticism through three key phases, which are similar with Ellen Showalter’s stages of feminist criticism. The representation phase examines how nature is depicted in literature, identifying stereotypes and omissions that shape environmental perceptions. The recovery phase centered on rediscovering and promoting nature writing, emphasizing works by writers like Thoreau and Carson to reconnect literature with ecological awareness and advocating nature’s importance. The theoretical phase critiques dualistic thinking that separates humans from nature, incorporating concepts such as ecofeminism and deep ecology. These phases highlight the evolution of ecocriticism from representation to theoretical phase throughout the history (Glotfelty, 2015, pp. 125–126).

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

In *The Deep Ecology Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects* (2005), Arne Naess presents two philosophies of ecology: shallow ecology and deep ecology. Deep ecology is described as a holistic and intrinsic value stance that puts the health of all life ahead of human use and that calls for significant ideological and structural change to solve environmental crises. In contrast, shallow ecology is an anthropocentric specialty that deals with resource management and technological solutions for the sake of human being without questioning fundamental assumptions rooted in the

idea of growth. According to Naess (2005), deep ecology promotes a fundamental change of values, pays attention to the value of life and the quality of life and launches into public debate and action to introduce revolutionary changes.

*Ecofeminism: An overview and discussion of positions and arguments* by Val Plumwood, 1986, bases itself on the linking of the domination of women and nature in Patriarchal structures. Plumwood is critical of dualistic frameworks that dichotomize culture and nature and men and women, for they sustain both forms of degradation of the environment and of women (Plumwood, 1986). She argues for an integrative approach to these dualisms and a more relational and ethical position on human and non-human life. Overall, Plumwood's work in the anthropocentric critique and deep ecology converges in that it departs from what constitutes deep ecology only to put forth social and eco justice as greater scope of environmental ethics.

An ecofeminist approach to the metaphorical portrayal of nature as a feminized entity in seventeenth century English poetry is discussed by Phillips (2004). It was a period for which she claims that poets of the period often described nature as a female subject, passive, vulnerable to domination by men, in line with broader patriarchal and exploitative attitudes that were directed both toward women and toward the environment. Phillips analyzes literary works that foreground the linkage between environmental and feminist critique in terms of the issue of ecological destruction in terms of its inscriptions as a mode of violation. Her study supports the ecofeminist argument that stories of the subjugation have material effects on real world gender and environmental oppression (Phillips. 2004)

### **Kishwar Naheed**

Arshad Masood Hashmi (2014), in his article "*The Impure Woman: Marginality and Detachment in the Poetry of Kishwar Naheed*", critically explores the themes of gendered identity, marginality, and socio-political detachment in the works of Kishwar Naheed. Hashmi contextualizes Naheed's poetry within a larger feminist discourse of South Asia, how she challenges the prevailing patriarchal structures through women's voices as these are considered impure in the society. Naheed goes subversive on the language and image she uses to tackle the questions of female oppression, resistance, alienation, the article points out. Also, Hashmi highlights the poet's 'detachment' – not in the sense of emotional disengagement but as an intentional distancing enabling a critique of cultural and political constructs. However, this study offers a significant contribution to feminist literary criticism, as Naheed's poetic resistance touches upon and modifies the discussion about women characters in Pakistani society (Hashmi, 2014).

Naheed's poetry is considered by Qasim (2023) as a site to reclaim the women subjectivity within oppressive and gendered spaces. In her article "*A Bad Woman's Poetry and its Reclamation as an Authentic Self*", Qasim asserts that this is an effect of 'personal and communal' pain that explodes into a poetics of resistance to the narratives which are circulating about women and women's morality. Naheed constructs an alternative female self through defiance, trauma and identity, which defies cultural expectations to assert autonomy. Qasim's study enhances understanding of Naheed's work, particularly in terms of its psychological and existential aspects as well as the reclaiming self from habitus of patriarchal society (Qasim, 2023).

In the article "*Triumph over Patriarchy: Acts of Resistance in the Poetry of Kishwar Naheed*", Shoaib and Zafar (2022) have discussed that Naheed's poetry acts to challenge and undermine patriarchal doctrines. These poems study the poet's depiction of women's resistance to struggle and defiance in the context of resistance against traditional gender roles and the outside world. Naheed's poetry is identified by their analysis as a powerful feminist instrument of resistance and ideological transformation in the language of universality (Shoaib & Zafar, 2022).

## METHOD

The textual analysis is employed in this study for the discussion on Kishwar Naheed's selected poems. Textual analysis is a method used for interpretation by focusing on a text. This method will help in analyzing the ecofeminist elements present in the selected poems. Catherine Belsey describes the use of textual analysis as a way for interpreting literary texts (Almas, 2022). Along with this, qualitative research design is used to analyze the text. Qualitative research is carried out without prioritizing numerical values; instead, it emphasizes a deep comprehension of the interaction between the concepts being examined (Semi, 2012). The study is followed by literary analysis based on ecofeminist theory, particularly focusing on the ideas developed by theorists like Françoise d'Eaubonne and Vandana Shiva. This study will apply ecofeminist line by line on the selected poems to identify the interconnected portrayal of women and nature. The poems are translated version by Rukhsana Ahmed and available in print and online sources.

This research is grounded in Ecofeminism, a literary and social theory that highlights the interconnected oppression of women and nature. Coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974), ecofeminism emerged as a response to the recognition that the exploitation of the environment and the subjugation of women are both products of patriarchal, capitalist systems (d'Eaubonne, 1974). Ecofeminists argue that the same mindset which justifies environmental degradation also legitimizes the control and oppression of women. Thus, ecofeminism calls for an intersectional struggle against all forms of domination, advocating for both gender justice and environmental sustainability (Warren, 1990).

Vandana Shiva (1988) expanded ecofeminism by connecting it to the colonial and capitalist exploitation of indigenous communities, particularly in the Global South. She argues that modern capitalist development models, driven by patriarchal values, have destroyed the natural environment while simultaneously marginalizing women who historically acted as protectors of nature. Shiva emphasizes that women possess unique knowledge systems rooted in sustainable practices, and their empowerment is crucial for restoring ecological balance. In the context of literary studies, ecofeminism serves as a tool to critique texts that either reinforce or resist these systems of domination (Shiva, 1988). By applying this lens, literary works can be analyzed for how they represent the mutual struggles and resilience of both women and nature.

In ecofeminist literary criticism, nature is not treated merely as a passive backdrop but as an active presence often intertwined with feminine identity. As Greta Gaard (1993) notes, ecofeminist readings highlight symbolic parallels between women's bodies and the earth, both subjected to control, exploitation, and violence under hierarchical systems. Therefore, ecofeminism does not only critique environmental injustice but also examines how gender roles and environmental representations overlap in literary narratives. Through this perspective, literature becomes a space to expose the interconnected suffering of marginalized groups and ecosystems, while also imagining possibilities for liberation and healing (Gaard, 1993).

Applying ecofeminism to Kishwar Naheed's selected poems offers a critical framework to uncover how she portrays the intricate relationship between women and nature. Naheed's poetry often reflects themes of resistance against patriarchal oppression, drawing parallels between the abuse of women and the destruction of the natural world. Using ecofeminism enables a deeper analysis of how her poetic expressions challenge dominant structures and advocate for the dignity and restoration of both women and the environment. Therefore, ecofeminism provides a comprehensive theoretical lens for this study, aligning with the core concerns reflected in Naheed's literary work.

## FINDINGS

### ANALYSIS

#### 1. The Grass is Really Like Me

Kishwar Naheed's *The Grass is Really Like Me* exposes the shared oppression faced by women and nature under patriarchal domination. However, the poem does not merely depict victimization, it also highlights the resilience and resistance inherent in both.

The poem opens with the powerful line, "*The Grass is also like me,*" immediately establishing a parallel between women and grass. This connection is central to an ecofeminist reading, which critiques the dual exploitation of women and the natural world by patriarchal systems. The word "*also*" underscores their sameness, suggesting that both are subjected to similar forms of control and violence. Naheed extends this comparison in her other poem, *We Sinful Women*, where she writes, "*while those who sell the harvest of our body.*" Here, women's bodies are likened to trees and plants, reduced to mere sources of production, valued only for what they can provide for others.

The next line, "*It has to unfurl underfoot to fulfil itself,*" reinforces this subjugation. The pronoun "*it*" refers to both grass and women, suggesting that both must submit to male dominance to be deemed "*complete*" The grass, which serves as a footpath, and women, who are expected to be passive and accommodating, are both forced into roles that serve patriarchal interests. This line presents a paradox: while the grass provides the foundation for life (allowing walking, growth, and stability) and women are the source of creation, beauty, and labor, both are treated as subordinate to men.

Naheed then poses a haunting question: "*but what does its wetness manifest: / a scorching sense of shame / or the heat of emotion?*" The "*wetness*" can be interpreted in multiple ways, dew on grass, the dampness left by footsteps, or, metaphorically, the tears and sweat of oppressed women. Dew and tears share a symbolic connection: both emerge in the morning after a long night, representing suffering endured in silence. The poet questions whether this moisture signifies "*shame*" (internalized oppression) or "*heat of emotion*" (suppressed rage and defiance). In a patriarchal society, women constantly navigate conflicting emotions, love and resentment, compliance and rebellion. The "*heat of emotion*" suggests a smoldering resistance, hinting at the potential for revolt.

The second stanza repeats the refrain, "*The Grass is also like me,*" emphasizing the unbreakable bond between women and nature. Naheed writes, "*As soon as it can raise its head / the lawnmower obsessed with flattening it into velvet.*" Here, "*raising its head*" symbolizes attempts at autonomy, women speaking out, demanding rights, or asserting independence. Yet, just as grass is cut down when it grows too tall, women are silenced and *trimmed* back into subservience. The "*lawnmower*" is a critical symbol: rather than blaming an individual (a gardener), Naheed critiques the systemic tools, laws, ideologies, and cultural norms, that enforce women's oppression. The choice of "*lawnmower*" over "*gardener*" may also reflect the poet's own constraints; writing under patriarchal scrutiny, she avoids directly naming men, instead indicting the machinery of control.

The "*velvet*" metaphor reveals how patriarchy aestheticizes submission. A manicured lawn is prized for its smooth, uniform beauty, just as women are praised for obedience, silence, and physical perfection. The line "*mows it down again*" underscores the cyclical nature of this violence, women's voices are suppressed repeatedly throughout history. Naheed directly challenges this oppression: "*how you strive and endeavor / to level women down too!*" Here, she accuses patriarchal forces of actively working to diminish women, just as they dominate nature.

The poem ends on a note of defiance: "*but neither the earth's nor woman's / desire to manifest life dies.*" Despite attempts to crush them, both women and nature possess an indomitable will to survive and regenerate. The "*desire to manifest life*" signifies an inherent resistance, an unkillable spirit that ensures their persistence. This resilience is the core of Naheed's ecofeminist message: oppression may bend grass and women, but it cannot extinguish their vitality.

In the next line, Kishwar Naheed continues to draw parallels between herself, women, and the grass, emphasizing the oppression and yet the underlying resilience in both. The line, “*Take my advice: the idea of making a footpath was a good one.*” Here, the “*footpath*” symbolizes the routes and systems established by a patriarchal society to keep women (and nature) submissive, creating fixed roles for them. This “*good idea*” is ironic, it exposes how society rationalizes and normalizes the subjugation of women and nature under the pretense of order and progress.

The next lines, “*Those who cannot bear the scorching defeat of their courage / are grafted on to the earth,*” show the brutal consequences of this suppression. The “*scorching defeat of courage*” represents how women, like rebellious grass, are crushed emotionally and mentally when they resist the dominant structures. “*Grafted onto the earth*” suggests forced submission, a loss of individual will, merging them back into silence and invisibility, a fate shared by both women and the natural world in patriarchal control.

Naheed states, “*That’s how they make way for the mighty,*” which exposes the system’s design: the broken spirits and suppressed lives of women and nature are the foundation upon which male dominance stands tall. Yet, she sharply differentiates between passive surrender and true resilience by adding, “*but they are merely straw not grass.*” Here, “*straw*” becomes a powerful metaphor: while straw is dry, lifeless, and used only as a tool, real grass retains its vitality, its ability to grow back even after being flattened. Through this, she asserts that true women, like herself, refuse to become straw; they embody the persistent spirit of grass, alive and unyielding.

Finally, with the line “*-the grass is really like me,*” she reiterates the deep identification between herself and the grass. The dash before the line shows a moment of realization, a firm conclusion that despite the repeated attempts at suppression, her spirit (and that of women at large) remains alive and defiant, just as the grass grows back relentlessly. In first and the last stanza, she used “*also*” to show a comparison between her and the grass, but in this line, there is no “*also*” as it replaced with “*really*”, which shows a resistance they both have and make them “*really*” same. This concluding identification reinforces the ecofeminist theme: women and nature both face violence under patriarchy but harbor a resilience that cannot be permanently erased.

## 2. We Sinful Women

In *We Sinful Women*, Kishwar Naheed uses a bold, defiant voice to highlight the systemic oppression faced by women, drawing a clear connection between the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature, key concerns of ecofeminism. Like nature, women are seen as resources to be controlled, consumed, and defined by patriarchal structures, but Naheed’s poem also celebrates resistance against this imposed subservience.

The repetition of “*It is we sinful women*” creates a collective identity, women who refuse to conform to the passive, submissive roles assigned to them by a male-dominated society. The word “*sinful*” is re-appropriated by the poet: traditionally, women are labeled “*sinful*” for stepping beyond societal norms, just as nature is often blamed for its “*wildness*” needing control. Through an ecofeminist perspective, this reclamation of “*sin*” becomes a celebration of women’s natural instincts to resist and assert themselves, just as nature naturally rebels against attempts to dominate it.

Naheed’s lines “*who don’t sell our lives / who don’t bow our heads / who don’t fold our hands together*” depict the refusal of women to submit economically, socially, or spiritually. Ecofeminism teaches that the same systems which commodify nature also commodify women’s bodies and lives. By refusing to “*sell*” their lives, these women resist the capitalist and patriarchal system that reduces both women and nature to objects of trade and exploitation.

Further, the poem draws a stark contrast between the “*sinful women*” and “*those who sell the harvests of our bodies*” who become “*the just princes of the material world.*” Here, Naheed exposes how the exploitation of women, just like the exploitation of land and resources, feeds the material

success of the powerful. The “*harvest*” metaphor deeply connects women’s bodies to agricultural, natural imagery, reinforcing the ecofeminist view that both female bodies and the Earth’s bodies are treated as commodities to be reaped and profited from by patriarchal forces.

The stanza “*who come out raising the banner of truth / up against barricades of lies on the highways*” portrays women standing up like fierce elements of nature, winds that tear down barriers, floods that wash away lies. The “*barricades of lies*” represent the institutions and traditions built to maintain male superiority. Ecofeminism often associates truth and resistance with the Earth’s natural forces, which, when unleashed, challenge human (patriarchal) attempts at control.

When Naheed says, “*who find stories of persecution piled on each threshold / who find that tongues which could speak have been severed,*” she draws attention to the silencing and erasure of women’s voices, much like how industrialization and colonization attempt to erase indigenous natural landscapes. Severed tongues symbolize the destruction of agency, an experience shared by both women and exploited ecosystems, both are made voiceless by systems of domination.

The lines “*even if the night gives chase / these eyes shall not be put out*” express an unwavering hope and resilience. In ecofeminism, despite relentless assaults (deforestation, pollution, industrial exploitation), nature finds ways to resist and regenerate. Similarly, women’s spirits, though oppressed by endless societal “*nights,*” remain watchful, vibrant, and ready for dawn.

Finally, the lines about “*the wall which has been razed*” and “*don’t insist now on raising it again*” suggest a breaking away from old oppressive structures. Nature, once freed from walls and enclosures, cannot be tamed again easily. Women, once awakened to their power, will not accept re-enslavement. This echoes ecofeminist beliefs in irreversible awakenings, that once the interconnectedness of nature and women’s oppression is realized, it cannot be unseen or undone.

The poem ends with a repetition of the earlier stance, “*who don’t sell our bodies / who don’t bow our heads / who don’t fold our hands together*”, reinforcing the solidarity and firm resistance of women, much like a resilient ecosystem that continues to thrive despite being battered by human greed.

Thus, through an ecofeminist lens, *We Sinful Women* is not just a declaration of rebellion against patriarchal oppression of women, but also an echo of nature’s persistent defiance against exploitation. Kishwar Naheed aligns women with the Earth itself, oppressed, commodified, yet enduring and rebelliously alive.

## DISCUSSION

Kishwar Naheed’s poetry builds a strong relationship between the female experience and the natural world. Through her poems *The Grass is Really Like Me* and *We Sinful Women*, she highlights how both nature and women are targeted by the same systems of control, especially patriarchal power. In both poems, women and the earth are not just passive victims, but they also fight back. In *The Grass is Really Like Me*, she compares herself to grass, not just because it is weak or soft, but because it grows again after being cut down. This idea of regrowth is very important in ecofeminism. Grass may seem fragile, but it has a kind of quiet power, it survives. Similarly, women, even when oppressed or silenced, still find ways to exist, to speak, to return.

The poem shows how patriarchy wants to control both the land and the body of women. The line “*the lawnmower obsessed with flattening it into velvet*” is not just about grass being cut, but about how women are forced to be smooth, silent, obedient. The grass cannot be too wild, too tall, it must be beautiful in a way that men want. The same with women. But Naheed points out that even when women are controlled this way, they still carry desire, emotion, resistance. The “*wetness*” she speaks about could be tears, could be dew, could even be sweat. But none of it means surrender. It might mean shame, but it could also be passion or anger. That confusion itself is powerful. It shows how deep and painful the experience of being a woman in a patriarchal society is, and how tightly it

is linked to nature's own suffering. Yet, just like grass, which keeps growing back, women too continue to fight, to exist.

*We Sinful Women* builds on this resistance, but in a louder and more collective way. Here, Naheed is not only talking about herself but about a group of women who all refuse to accept the roles given to them. These "sinful" women are called rebellious, disobedient, dangerous, but Naheed makes this a badge of honor. Just like nature is seen as wild and chaotic when it doesn't serve human needs, women are seen as sinful when they do not follow male rules. The poem shows how women are sold, silenced, and shaped, but some refuse. The lines "who don't bow our heads / who don't fold our hands together" are very clear. These women do not pray for permission. They do not wait quietly. They speak and act for themselves.

Naheed also uses imagery from farming and nature to describe how women are treated, as if they are land to be harvested. In both poems, women's bodies are described like soil or crops. This is not accidental. It reflects the ecofeminist idea that women and the earth are both seen as property. In *We Sinful Women*, the line about "those who sell the harvest of our bodies" shows this directly. It is not just poetic, it is political. It is a protest. Naheed is saying, very clearly, that women are tired of being treated like objects to be used, traded, or praised only when they are quiet. And just like nature cannot be fully controlled, storms come, rivers flood, forests regrow, women too will always find ways to resist.

, these poems make a powerful ecofeminist statement. Naheed shows that even when women are silenced, even when their heads are bowed by force, even when their lives are cut down like grass, they are not defeated. Like nature, they return. They rise again. She ends *The Grass is Really Like Me* with a powerful shift, from "also like me" to "really like me." This change is not small. It means she now sees no difference between herself and the grass. It is not just a metaphor. It is the truth. Women and nature are deeply connected in their pain, in their history, but also in their strength and survival. And this, at its heart, is what ecofeminism is about. Not just showing what is wrong but showing what still lives. What still fights. What cannot be killed.

## CONCLUSION

On the Concluding note, it can be said that Kishwar Naheed's poetry clearly shows how ecofeminism is applicable by linking the oppression of women and nature under a male-dominated system. In poems like *The Grass is Really Like Me*, and *We Sinful Women*, she compares women to grass, forests, flowers, and seasons to show that both women and nature are treated as weak, used, and silenced. Her poetry portrays how women and nature are interconnected in their suffering but also in their strength to resist and survive. Even when they are crushed, they find ways to rise again. By using natural images, Naheed highlights that the struggle of women is not separate from the struggle of nature, and both face exploitation in similar ways. Through her simple but powerful language, she gives a voice to this shared oppression and shows that no matter how strong the forces against them are, the spirit of women and nature can never be destroyed.

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